

Amendments to th Claims

530 Claim 1-16 (cancelled without prejudice)

Claim 17 (New) A tonneau cover apparatus for removable attachment about a top of a perimeter of a cargo box of a pickup truck, the perimeter of the cargo box including a forward end, two opposing sidewalls and a tailgate, the tailgate being
535 positioned rearward of the forward end and having an open position and a closed position, the tonneau cover apparatus comprising:

a flexible cover, the flexible cover having first and second ends;

540 a support frame for attachment to the cargo box; the support frame having two opposing side rails and a pair of end plate engagement members, each of which is secured to one of the respective opposing side rails in a position rearward of the forward end when the tonneau cover apparatus is attached to the cargo box;

545 an end plate attached to the second end of the flexible cover, the end plate configured to cooperatively engage the respective end plate engagement members when the flexible cover is drawn over the top of the perimeter of the cargo box; wherein the end plate engagement members cooperate to engage the end plate in a full engagement position when the first end of the flexible cover is
550 operatively connected to the support frame forward of the respective end plate

engagement members, such that the end plate is in a fixed stretching position when the end plate is in the full engagement position, wherein the flexible cover is stretched so as to place a tension on the flexible cover; and

555 a locking member, the locking member being secured to the end plate and movable between a first position and a second position when the end plate is in the fixed stretching position; wherein the locking member prevents the end plate from being disengaged from the fixed stretching position when the locking member is in the first position in which an extension of the locking member
560 engages the side rail adjacent to the end plate to prevent such movement, and wherein the end plate can be disengaged from the fixed stretching position when the locking member is in the second position.

Claim 18 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the
565 end plate has an underside and the locking member is operatively connected to the underside of the end plate.

Claim 19 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the locking member is spring biased toward the first position.

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Claim 20 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 19, wherein the tonneau cover apparatus includes an elongated member attached to the locking member such that force can be placed upon the locking member by pulling the

elongated member in opposition to a spring biasing force biasing the locking
575 member toward the first position by drawing the locking member away from the
first position toward the second position.

Claim 21 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the
locking member is spring biased toward the first position and the locking member
580 is operatively connected to an underside of the end plate and positioned in such
a manner that the support frame displaces the locking member from the first
position to the second position for a brief period of time when the end plate pivots
with respect to the support frame into the fixed stretching position.

585 Claim 22 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, the locking
member being a first locking member and the tonneau cover apparatus further
includes a second locking member, each of the respective first and second
locking members being secured to the end plate proximate respective opposite
ends of the end plate; wherein each of the opposing side rails include an inwardly
590 extending flange portion and each locking member includes a finger portion, the
finger portion of each locking member being engaged with the inwardly extending
flange portion of the respective opposing side rail when the respective locking
member is in a first position, the finger portion of each of the respective locking
members disengaging from the inwardly extending flange portion of the
595 respective side rail when the respective locking member is moved from the first
position to a second position.

Claim 23 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 22, wherein each of the respective first and second locking members is biased toward the
600 first position and force is required to displace the respective first and second locking members from the first position.

Claim 24 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 23, wherein the end plate includes a pair of springs, each spring interconnected between the end
605 plate and one of the locking members so as to provide a biasing force between the end plate and the respective locking member such that each of the respective locking members are biased toward the first position.

Claim 25 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 24, wherein the
610 tonneau cover apparatus includes first and second elongated members attached to each of the respective locking members such that force can be placed upon each respective locking member by pulling each of the respective elongated members in opposition to a respective spring biasing force biasing each of the respective locking members toward the respective first positions by drawing each
615 of the respective locking members away from the respective first position toward the respective second position.

Claim 26 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the respective springs are selected from the group consisting of compression springs

620 and tension springs.

Claim 27 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the spring is a tension spring.

625 Claim 28 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 26, wherein the spring is a compression spring.

Claim 29 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the side rail includes an inwardly extending flange portion and the locking member
630 includes an outwardly extended finger portion, the finger portion of the locking member being engaged with the inwardly extending flange portion adjacent to the end plate and rearward of the respective first and second engagement positions with respect to the forward end when the tonneau cover apparatus is attached to the cargo box and the locking member is in the first position, the
635 finger portion of the locking member disengaging from the inwardly extending flange portion when the locking member is moved from the first position to the second position.

Claim 30 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 29, the locking
640 member being a first locking member and the tonneau cover apparatus further including a second locking member that is a functional and structural mirror image of the first locking member when operatively connected to the end plate,

the second locking member being secured to one end of the end plate and the first locking member being secured to the opposite end of the end plate.

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Claim 31 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the end plate includes a spring, the spring being interconnected between the end plate and the locking member so as to provide a biasing tension between the end plate and the spring such that the locking member is biased toward the first position.

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Claim 32 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the locking member has an upper portion having a main body which is slidably retained by the end plate, the finger portion is spaced apart from the upper portion and extends outwardly beyond the main body of the upper portion, and the locking member is biased toward the first position and force is required to displace the locking members from the first position.

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Claim 33 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 32, wherein the end plate includes a spring, the spring being interconnected between the end plate and the locking member so as to provide a biasing tension between the end plate and the spring such that the locking member is biased toward the first position.

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665 Claim 34 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 33, wherein the

spring is selected from the group consisting of compression springs and tension springs.

Claim 35 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the
670 spring is a tension spring.

Claim 36 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 34, wherein the spring is a compression spring.

675 Claim 37 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 29, wherein the locking member includes an upper portion having a main body which is slidably retained by the end plate, and the finger portion is spaced apart from the upper portion and extends outwardly beyond the main body of the upper portion.

680 Claim 38 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 37, wherein the end plate includes a generally "T" shaped channel and a cross-section of the upper portion of the locking member is generally "T" shaped, the generally "T" shaped channel of the end plate configured to slidably receive and retain the generally "T" shaped cross-section of the upper portion.

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Claim 39 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 38, further including oppositely disposed guide strips positioned between interior surfaces of the generally "T" shaped channel and an exterior surface of the generally "T"

shaped upper portion of the locking member, the respective guide strips each
690 imparting a frictional force which resists motion between the generally "T" shaped
upper position of the locking member as it moves within the generally "T" shaped
channel of the end plate.

Claim 40 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the
695 generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member includes a friction
imparting element and two oppositely opposed guide strips, the friction imparting
element extending beyond the main body of the generally "T" shaped upper
portion of the locking member to slidably engage an interior surface of the
generally "T" shaped channel, the friction imparting element and the respective
700 guide strips creating frictional forces which resist motion by the locking member
as the locking member moves relative to the end plate.

Claim 41 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 38, further
including a friction imparting element positioned between an interior surface of
705 the generally "T" shaped channel and an exterior surface of the generally "T"
shaped upper portion of the locking member to which the friction imparting
element is attached, the friction imparting element imparting a frictional force
which resists motion by the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking
member as it moves within the generally "T" shaped channel of the end plate.

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Claim 42 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 41, wherein the

friction imparting element is attached to an exterior surface of the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member and the exterior surface of the upper element onto which the friction imparting element is attached is a top surface.

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Claim 43 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the friction imparting element comprises a strip of a loop portion of a hook and loop type strip fastener, the strip extending along the longitudinal extent of the upper member.

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Claim 44 (New) A tonneau cover apparatus for removable attachment about a top of a perimeter of a cargo box of a pickup truck, the perimeter of the cargo box including a forward end, two opposing sidewalls and a tailgate, the tailgate being positioned rearward of the forward end and having an open position and a closed position, the tonneau cover apparatus comprising:

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a flexible cover, the flexible cover having first and second ends;

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a support frame for attachment to the cargo box; the support frame having two opposing side rails and a pair of end plate engagement members, each of which is secured to one of the respective opposing side rails in a position rearward of the forward end when the tonneau cover apparatus is attached to the cargo box;

an end plate attached to the second end of the flexible cover, the end plate

735 configured to cooperatively engage the respective end plate engagement members when the flexible cover is drawn over the top of the perimeter of the cargo box; wherein the end plate engagement members cooperate to engage the end plate in a full engagement position when the first end of the flexible cover is operatively connected to the support frame forward of the respective end plate engagement members, such that the end plate is in a fixed stretching position when the end plate is in the full engagement position, wherein the flexible cover is stretched so as to place a tension on the flexible cover; and

a locking member, the locking member being slidably secured within a channel
745 within the end plate and movable between a first position and a second position when the end plate is in the fixed stretching position; wherein the locking member prevents the end plate from being disengaged from the fixed stretching position when the locking member is in the first position in which an extension of the locking member engages the side rail adjacent to the end plate to prevent such
750 movement, and wherein the end plate can be disengaged from the fixed stretching position when the locking member is in the second position.

Claim 45 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the end plate has an underside and the locking member is operatively connected to
755 the underside of the end plate.

Claim 46 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the locking member is spring biased toward the first position.

760 Claim 47 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the tonneau cover apparatus includes an elongated member attached to the locking member such that force can be placed upon the locking member by pulling the elongated member in opposition to a spring biasing force biasing the locking member toward the first position by drawing the locking member away from the
765 first position toward the second position.

Claim 48 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the locking member is spring biased toward the first position and the locking member is operatively connected to an underside of the end plate and positioned in such
770 a manner that the support frame displaces the locking member from the first position to the second position for a brief period of time when the end plate pivots with respect to the support frame into the fixed stretching position.

Claim 49 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, the locking
775 member being a first locking member and the tonneau cover apparatus further includes a second locking member, each of the respective first and second locking members being secured to the end plate proximate respective opposite ends of the end plate; wherein each of the opposing side rails include an inwardly extending flange portion and each locking member includes a finger portion, the

780 finger portion of each locking member being engaged with the inwardly extending
flange portion of the respective opposing side rail when the respective locking
member is in a first position, the finger portion of each of the respective locking
members disengaging from the inwardly extending flange portion of the
respective side rail when the respective locking member is moved from the first
785 position to a second position.

Claim 50 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 49, wherein
each of the respective first and second locking members is biased toward the
first position and force is required to displace the respective first and second
790 locking members from the first position.

Claim 51 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 50, wherein the
end plate includes a pair of springs, each spring interconnected between the end
plate and one of the locking members so as to provide a biasing force between
795 the end plate and the respective locking member such that each of the respective
locking members are biased toward the first position.

Claim 52 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 51, wherein the
tonneau cover apparatus includes first and second elongated members attached
800 to each of the respective locking members such that force can be placed upon
each respective locking member by pulling each of the respective elongated
members in opposition to a respective spring biasing force biasing each of the

respective locking members toward the respective first positions by drawing each
of the respective locking members away from the respective first position toward
805 the respective second position.

Claim 53 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 52, wherein the
respective springs are selected from the group consisting of compression springs
and tension springs.

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Claim 54 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 53, wherein the
spring is a tension spring.

Claim 55 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 53, wherein the
815 spring is a compression spring.

Claim 56 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 44, wherein the
side rail includes an inwardly extending flange portion and the locking member
includes an outwardly extended finger portion, the finger portion of the locking
820 member being engaged with the inwardly extending flange portion adjacent to
the end plate and rearward of the respective first and second engagement
positions with respect to the forward end when the tonneau cover apparatus is
attached to the cargo box and the locking member is in the first position, the
finger portion of the locking member disengaging from the inwardly extending
825 flange portion when the locking member is moved from the first position to the

second position.

Claim 57 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 56, the locking member being a first locking member and the tonneau cover apparatus further
830 including a second locking member that is a functional and structural mirror image of the first locking member when operatively connected to the end plate, the second locking member being secured to one end of the end plate and the first locking member being secured to the opposite end of the end plate.

835 Claim 58 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 56, wherein the end plate includes a spring, the spring being interconnected between the end plate and the locking member so as to provide a biasing tension between the end plate and the spring such that the locking member is biased toward the first position.

840 Claim 59 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 56, wherein the locking member has an upper portion having a main body which is slidably retained by the end plate, the finger portion is spaced apart from the upper portion and extends outwardly beyond the main body of the upper portion, and
845 the locking member is biased toward the first position and force is required to displace the locking members from the first position.

Claim 60 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 59, wherein the

end plate includes a spring, the spring being interconnected between the end
850 plate and the locking member so as to provide a biasing tension between the end
plate and the spring such that the locking member is biased toward the first
position.

Claim 61 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 60, wherein the
855 spring is selected from the group consisting of compression springs and tension
springs.

Claim 62 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 61, wherein the
spring is a tension spring.

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Claim 63 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 61, wherein the
spring is a compression spring.

Claim 64 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 56, wherein the
865 locking member includes an upper portion having a main body which is slidably
retained by the end plate, and the finger portion is spaced apart from the upper
portion and extends outwardly beyond the main body of the upper portion.

Claim 65 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 64, wherein the
870 end plate includes a generally "T" shaped channel and a cross-section of the
upper portion of the locking member is generally "T" shaped, the generally "T"

shaped channel of the end plate configured to slidingly receive and retain the generally "T" shaped cross-section of the upper portion.

875 Claim 66 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 65, further including oppositely disposed guide strips positioned between interior surfaces of the generally "T" shaped channel and an exterior surface of the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member, the respective guide strips each imparting a frictional force which resists motion between the generally "T" shaped
880 upper position of the locking member as it moves within the generally "T" shaped channel of the end plate.

Claim 67 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 65, wherein the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member includes a friction
885 imparting element and two oppositely opposed guide strips, the friction imparting element extending beyond the main body of the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking member to slidingly engage an interior surface of the generally "T" shaped channel, the friction imparting element and the respective guide strips creating frictional forces which resist motion by the locking member
890 as the locking member moves relative to the end plate.

Claim 68 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 65, further including a friction imparting element positioned between an interior surface of the generally "T" shaped channel and an exterior surface of the generally "T"

895 shaped upper portion of the locking member to which the friction imparting
element is attached, the friction imparting element imparting a frictional force
which resists motion by the generally "T" shaped upper portion of the locking
member as it moves within the generally "T" shaped channel of the end plate.

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Claim 69 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 68, wherein the
friction imparting element is attached to an exterior surface of the generally "T"
shaped upper portion of the locking member and the exterior surface of the upper
element onto which the friction imparting element is attached is a top surface.

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Claim 70 (New) The tonneau cover apparatus according to claim 69, wherein the
friction imparting element comprises a strip of a loop portion of a hook and loop
type strip fastener, the strip extending along the longitudinal extent of the upper
member.

910 **In the Drawings**

Please replace the original drawings with the formal drawings enclosed herewith.